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Monday, 17 October 2011, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Al-Nasser ..... (Qatar)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Alotaibi (Kuwait), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 11

Sport for peace and development

(a) Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal

Draft resolution (A/66/L.3)

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the Right Honourable Lord Coe of Ranmore, Chair of the London Organizing Committee for the Olympic and Paralympic Games, to introduce draft resolution A/66/L.3.

Lord Coe (United Kingdom): I stand before the Assembly today as someone who has dedicated his life to sport and the Olympic movement, as an athlete and now as Chairman of the London Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games and the Paralympic Games in 2012. It is a real honour to be here this morning to introduce, ahead of the London 2012 Games, draft resolution A/66/L.3, entitled "Sport for peace and development: building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal", also known as the Olympic Truce resolution.

On behalf of the people of the United Kingdom, the British Government, the Mayor of the host city, London, and the British Olympic Association, I would like to express our sincere gratitude for the support that the members of the General Assembly have already provided for this draft resolution. The text is the result of consultations with all Member States, conducted in a spirit of openness and transparency. Their feedback and support strengthened the text, which we proudly present today, and I thank all delegations for their cooperation and collaboration, and particularly the Group of Friends of Sport for Development and Peace, who, under the co-chairmanship of Monaco and Tunisia, have helped to steer the draft resolution to this point.

The pursuit of a better, more peaceful world has always been at the heart of the Olympic vision. Baron Pierre de Coubertin, the founding father of the modern Olympic Movement, saw in the Games a great opportunity

> "to contribute to building a peaceful and better world by educating youth through sport .... [And] to create a way of life based on the joy found in the effort, the educational value of good example and respect for universal, fundamental ethical principles".

Today, more than a century later, those principles are as valid and as relevant as ever. The extraordinary level of co-sponsorship of this year's Olympic Truce draft resolution — all 193 members of the Assembly — is a sign of hope and support for the timeless values symbolized by the Truce and the Olympic Movement,

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and a testament to the relevance of the Truce and the Olympic Games in a time of global challenge.

But in those challenges also lies opportunity. Throughout history, great political, technological, cultural, artistic and other advances have emerged from times of adversity. The United Nations emerged from World War II; satellite technology from the Cold War; even great jazz from the Great Depression. We always need to search for new ways of thinking and acting. The Olympic Truce, and the Olympic values and programmes that support it, really can promote peace.

Sport is one of those forces that can still offer real hope, both collective and individual. It has many roles, such as the quiet, deft diplomat, or even the hidden peacemaker. And, for over a century, the modern Olympic Movement has given voice to the positive values of humanity, not merely reflecting change but driving it. The Olympic Movement forges links well beyond traditional social and diplomatic structures or geographic boundaries.

It would be folly to suggest that sport provides a complete answer, a panacea for all our social ills. But it can and does help mend broken communities, rebuild trust, rediscover self-respect and foster the values at the core of our common humanity. And there are the powerful examples of sport breaking through man-made barriers of ignorance and hate — none better than Jesse Owens shattering the myth of racism at the Olympic Games of 1936.

I competed in the Moscow Games in 1980 — due in large part to the visionary determination of the late Juan Antonio Samaranch, then President of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), to take the Games into the then Soviet Union — sport helping to foster understanding and create an extended network of new friendship, association and opportunity across ideological and geographic divides. North and South Korean athletes marched together into the opening ceremony of the Sydney Olympics, again demonstrating the power of sport to bring people together, in a way that politicians alone could not.

It has never been more important to support this General Assembly draft resolution by actions, not just through words. Between now and the Games, the United Kingdom Government will lead a wide range of activities to promote peaceful development. It has committed about $36 million to deliver an innovative global sports programme called International Inspiration. Aimed at young people from all backgrounds, it goes to the heart and soul of our vision for the London 2012 Games and, of course, the Olympic Truce.

International Inspiration has already reached out to more than 12 million young people in 15 countries, through a unique partnership involving UNICEF, national Olympic committees and British Government agencies, and four more countries have recently joined the programme. It is improving sports systems in developing countries, increasing school attendance and enhancing educational performance. It has empowered girls and young women to participate in sport, access education and become community leaders. It has increased self-esteem and confidence and raised awareness of HIV/AIDS and other threats to health. International Inspiration has also supported reconciliation by hosting sports events in camps for young people who have been displaced by conflict. It has also offered purpose and anchor points that have helped street children transform their lives.

Closer to home, our Olympic and Paralympic education programme, Get Set, is bringing alive in British schools and communities the Olympic and Paralympic values of friendship, respect, excellence, courage and determination. It is promoting social inclusion, health and physical activity and tackling bullying and gang culture.

I am also very proud that the draft resolution strongly highlights how sport enhances the lives of those who live with disabilities — and how much they contribute to the world of sport. The passion and determination of Paralympic athletes is an inspiration to us all.

We look forward to working with the IOC, other Member States and civil society on further activities to promote the Truce. These will be designed to help find local solutions to local challenges and contribute to long-term peace and stability.

We applaud the work of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and his officials, notably his Special Adviser on Sport for Development and Peace, Wilfried Lemke, and his team. With IOC President Jacques Rogge, they are finding new ways to develop communities and build peace through sport. In particular, we are grateful for their promotion of gender equality, inclusion of people living with disabilities, prevention of HIV and AIDS and other diseases, environmental sustainability,

and peace and conflict resolution. We encourage others to support Mr. Lemke's mandate and his work.

The working partnership between the United Nations and the Olympic Movement is closer than ever, as evidenced by the IOC's recent admission as an Observer in the Assembly and by day-to-day cooperation among the IOC, Olympic Organizing Committees and United Nations agencies. This deepening relationship gives a new significance to initiatives like the Olympic Truce. It provides opportunities for greater collaboration among United Nations Member States through sport-related programmes, which we know can make a real difference to the lives of young people and their communities.

The United Kingdom had the honour of hosting the Olympic Games in 1948, when the world had been shattered by global conflict and still simmered with tension and hostility. In fact, the route of the Olympic Torch to London had to be altered to allow for safe passage through parts of Europe. Today, we cannot ignore the continuing spectre of conflict around the world. Through this draft resolution, anchored in the original spirit of de Coubertin's vision, we can, together, take active steps to ensure that the Olympics continue to serve the cause of peace.

The vision for the London 2012 Games and the Truce is focused on young people and on giving them a voice. So I would like to leave the Assembly with a message from two young people who represent that vision: Amber Charles, a Londoner now studying in America on a sports scholarship, and Ali Mohamed, who has been recently elected as Young Mayor by the young people of Newham, one of the host boroughs for the London Games. Both of them are with us today as members of our official delegation. Amber and Ali have asked me to give the Assembly this message:

> "The Truce helps to show the world that peace is a possibility. It shows the power that sport has to inspire unity, mutual understanding and respect among different types of people. Countries should feel an obligation to respect the Truce, because it holds true to the idea that we can coexist without the need for discrimination and fighting. It gives us something to strive towards outside of the Olympics and the arena of sport."

I cannot think of a more appropriate way to conclude this introduction of the draft resolution, or to highlight the importance of support for the Truce, than to quote one of the iconic figures of our time, Nelson Mandela, a long-time friend of the Olympic Movement and a supporter of the Games in London next year. "Sport", he said, "has the power to change the world. (...) Sport can create hope. (...) It is an instrument for peace".

Mr. Mitsialis (Greece): Since its inception, the ideal of the Olympic Games has been inextricably linked with the idea of the Truce. When King Ifitos of the ancient city of Olympia, concerned about the plague of war that was devastating the region, consulted the oracle of Delphi, the answer was unequivocal. A competitive sports event was the means to replace hostilities by peace. A peace agreement, signed by all the kings of the city-States in the region was placed in a holy shrine and the first Olympic Truce became a reality. Despite the difficulties that this project has encountered through the centuries, the tradition of ekecheiria — as the Truce was called in Greek — survived for 1,200 years, until the fourth century A.D., when the ancient Olympic Games came to an inglorious end.

Pierre de Coubertin's historic initiative to revive the Olympic Games in the modern era proved that the seed of Truce was alive and meant to blossom. But the two World Wars and numerous conflicts around the globe did not allow the idea of the Truce to thrive until the early 1990s, when the first United Nations resolution on the matter was adopted (resolution 48/11). Greece, a staunch supporter of the idea of the Olympic Truce, closely worked with the International Olympic Committee for the establishment in July 2000 of the International Olympic Truce Foundation and its operational arm, the International Olympic Truce Centre.

The embrace of the concept of the Olympic Truce by the United Nations was the conclusion of a long effort and, at the same time, the beginning of a new phase for the Truce. Having started in classical times as a precondition for the holding of the Olympic Games, in the process the Truce became a self-standing concept, closely associated with efforts to achieve world peace. Let us not forget that, as things stand today, the Olympic Truce remains — even just for a short period of time — the most far-reaching peace agreement in our globalized world. We therefore have the moral duty to acknowledge its importance, raise awareness of it and guarantee its implementation.

In our era, defined by the many challenges we face, the Olympic Truce, the harbinger of peace, tries to chart a course through the vagaries of world politics. Draft resolution A/66/L.3, entitled "Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal", urges all Member States to observe the Olympic Truce during the next Olympic Games. At the same time, it brings to the forefront the problems that our contemporary societies have to overcome, and that sport can help to solve, although only to a certain extent. If world peace is the ultimate aim, then civic peace, economic growth and social inclusion and integration are intermediate stages that need first to be passed through before the ultimate goal can be achieved.

Next year, for the third time in the modern era, London will have the honour of hosting the Olympic Games. Compared to the last London Games, in 1948, when the world was emerging from the nightmare of war, the global situation today is fundamentally different, although it certainly remains very challenging. In many parts of the planet, we are witnessing the ongoing quest of humankind for freedom, human rights and a decent life. The Olympic Games in London certainly remind us that humankind as a whole should tackle its problems in a spirit of solidarity and brotherhood, in the same way that athletes compete in sports. At this point, let us all wish London every success in this difficult endeavour.

In ancient Greece the Truce was proclaimed throughout the city States by a special herald. In our times, let this draft resolution be the herald to remind all Member States of their obligations emanating from the Charter of the United Nations to refrain from waging war and to adhere to all principles that guarantee world peace.

Mr. Wang Min (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Sport is not only a benchmark for measuring social development, it also serves as a bridge to promote communication among people of different countries. Given the unrelenting emergence of global issues and the close interdependence of developing countries, there is consensus among all on the goal of strengthening exchanges, dialogue and mutual understanding among civilizations. That consensus heightens the relevance and importance of the General Assembly taking up the agenda item entitled "Sport for peace and development".

China is of the view that the international community should place the issue of sport on the agenda of global cooperation for development. China attaches importance to the General Assembly's deliberations on sport for peace and development, appreciates the work of the Secretary-General's Special Adviser and will do its utmost to support United Nations endeavours in the area of sport for development.

Sport has a role to play in promoting social development and maintaining world peace. The international community should incorporate sport into the global cooperation agendas, such as peacekeeping operations, development, education, public heath, gender equality and the protection of the rights and interests of persons with disabilities. It is also imperative to better utilize the role of sport in promoting the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

China believes that upholding the Olympic spirit contributes to the settling of global crises. Crises cannot be resolved without the consensus of the parties involved. Mutual understanding and respect are the prerequisite for consensus. The concepts of unity, friendship and fair competition, advocated by the Olympic Games, have emerged as the common values and pursuit of all of humankind.

To fundamentally address the financial crisis and other global issues, countries must continue to abide by the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, uphold the Olympic spirit, respect cultural diversity, enhance mutual understanding, settle disputes through peaceful means and work together towards a world of equality and harmony.

The XXX Olympiad will be held in London in 2012. China wishes the London Olympic and Paralympic Games a complete success.

Although three years have passed since Beijing hosted the Olympic Games, the legacy of the Beijing Olympics is still very much in evidence. The legacy of the Beijing Olympic Games is not just limited to the large number of landmark sports facilities. The Games have also substantially promoted mass fitness programmes, urban planning, public health, environmental protection and a host of other important undertakings in China.

The Olympic spirit has spread far and wide among the Chinese people. China has designated 8 August, the opening date of the Beijing Olympics, as China's national fitness day. That is a solemn commitment made by the Chinese Government to developing China's sports endeavours.

China has hosted many sporting events in recent years, including the 2010 Asian Games in Guangzho, the 2011 Shenzhen University Games and the eighth National Games for Persons with a Disability from China, which is currently being held in Hangzhou. In 2014, China will host the second Youth Olympic Games.

This is the first year of the implementation of China's twelfth five-year plan for economic and social development. China's sport endeavours are also at a new historic turning point. The Chinese Government will continue to integrate sport into its national development strategy and provide more and better public sport services to its people. In the meantime, China will continue to play a positive role in the Group of Friends of Sport for Development and Peace and make vigorous efforts to advance international cooperation in sport for development, thereby contributing to world peace and development.

Mr. Singh Rawat (India): I am privileged to participate in today's debate on sport for peace and development and would like to thank the General Assembly for providing me with this opportunity to do so.

Sport is an important element in building character. Apart from ensuring fitness and a healthy lifestyle, it helps motivate young people, teaches them to work in a spirit of partnership with others, develops leadership skills and promotes a sense of team spirit. Sport also helps foster peace and a feeling of equality and friendship among all people and nations. There can be no more powerful medium than sport to inspire and bring people together for a common purpose.

The intrinsic linkage between sport and games and the human quest for excellence was recognized at the very inception of human civilization. It reached its high point in ancient Greece, which was the birthplace of the modern Olympic Movement. Sport, games and physical fitness have also been an integral part of Indian heritage, evident even today in the highly evolved system of yoga and the vast range of indigenous games and martial arts practiced in different parts of India since time immemorial.

After Indian independence, in 1947, the first five-year plan gave due importance to physical education and sport and emphasized its integration in the formal education system. In addition, as part of our efforts to expand participation in sport and encourage the creation of a modern sport infrastructure, in 2001 India adopted a national sport policy. In India today, all segments of our society, including the media and the business sector, are actively involved in the promotion of sport. We have also been encouraging the autonomous functioning of our national sport federations.

Sport is an effective tool that helps to achieve development objectives in the areas of health, education, child protection and child development. In addition, it helps to generate public awareness and inspires broad, inclusive and committed action in support of the development agenda.

I am glad to note that, today, the value of sport in helping to achieve the Millennium Development Goals is well recognized, and that many sport personalities have associated themselves with the United Nations in creating public awareness and understanding of various issues that affect youth and society. In that context, I would like to draw attention to our national cricket icon, Sachin Tendulkar, who is a Goodwill Ambassador for the United Nations Environment Programme, and our former tennis star, Vijay Amritraj, who was a United Nations Messenger of Peace in 2001.

In the recent past, India successfully hosted the XIX Commonwealth Games, an event that featured participation from 71 countries and more than 7,000 athletes, who celebrated sporting excellence, human skill and endurance and, above all, courage and character. The Games upheld and renewed the essential spirit of peace, equality and friendship among all people and nations.

Recognizing the importance of sport in building a peaceful and better world, India has sponsored the draft resolution entitled "Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal" (A/66/L.3), which will be adopted today. We sincerely believe that all sporting events strengthen the cherished ties of goodwill and understanding that unite us as one family.

Ms. Flores (Honduras) (*spoke in Spanish*): We congratulate the Secretary-General on his reports (A/66/280 and A/66/273) on the topics being discussed today, which complement each other and are of vital importance to many countries, including Honduras. Peace, development, culture and sport are legitimate aspirations of our peoples, and they underpin our commitment to participate in and promote the development of those ideals around the world.

None other than Nelson Mandela can remind us with more authority that

> "Sport has the power to change the world. It has the power to inspire. It has the power to unite people in a way that little else does. Sport can awaken hope where there was previously only despair."

How true those words are. There are few activities that can, like sport, so effectively instil the binding values of human coexistence. A mere glance at the rainbow of crowds in any stadium or sport complex shows that sport produces, if only for a few moments, a kind of magic that erases ethnic differences, social inequalities, economic disparities and political, ideological and religious differences.

The presence of small countries such as ours is rarely felt beyond national borders, except in the event of a scandal generated by a news item, but we have been able to stand out because of sport. Although it has been only for a few passing moments, since we are not at the top of any global agenda, thanks to sport, our people have been soothed by the comforting balm of applause and admiration.

How often the polarization of conflicts, acrimonious disputes, internal divisions, disparities across various sectors and special interests clouds the vision required to achieve unity of purpose or the common goals cherished by humankind. Nevertheless, for those few fleeting but resonant moments when we have witnessed our athletes proudly wearing our national colours and uniforms emblazoned with our national symbols in international sporting competitions, every heart in my country beats as one.

We are well aware of the temptations that beckon to our young people today, even more so in environments rife with unemployment, crime and delinquency and lacking opportunities. The children of poverty, the victims of backwardness and social exclusion, must face some hard realities in order to climb out of the hole and better themselves, sometimes just to survive. Anyone so desperate would be swayed by the prospect of taking a shortcut, which is the easy but the wrong way out. Every child and young person in whom we can awaken a passion for playing any sport is a child or young person less likely to be recruited into a life characterized by vice, drugs or by any other social ills that corrupt the soul and unravel the healthy fabric of our society.

A football field can do so much good in one of those neighbourhoods wracked by extreme poverty, or in the remote and forgotten corners of my own Honduras. It is moving to see the wide smiles on the dirty faces of the children, who in their little hearts feel that a soccer ball and a patch of dusty ground, with three wooden goalposts at each end, can miraculously lift their spirits and even change their lives.

I have seen that vision. Together with a team of volunteers and thanks to the support of generous donors, each year we sponsor a soccer tournament, a national world cup and a round of sporting events that bring together the students of many public schools in our capital city. The experiences are indescribable: enthusiasm, the convergence of hopes and yearnings, an awakening of the senses. When the children compete and share, the field lights up with spontaneous outbursts of camaraderie and love that are impossible to recount. It is as if the alchemy of this activity alone could turn everyone into important members of one great family.

The promotion of sport is one of the United Nations great contributions to building a culture of peace. We recognize the work of the Group of Friends of Sport for Development and Peace, created in January 2005 as an open forum for the representatives of Permanent Missions to the United Nations in New York. We commend the Permanent Representatives of Monaco and Tunisia and their Governments on their initiatives in support of sport and peace and on their efforts to promote the Olympic Truce, with a view to using sport as a means of accelerating progress towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. We also commend the United Kingdom for having coordinated the work on draft resolution A/66/L.3.

In our national plan of action, we propose that young people play a leading and responsible role in

transforming our national reality to one in which human rights are respected and upheld, where natural resources are protected and sensibly used and developed, and where all forms of life and cultural diversity are respected. That reality must also be about building peace and forging national unity, and about Central American and Latin American integration and our desire to build a more prosperous, developed, democratic and just homeland. However, we must re-evaluate and improve the focus of some United Nations assistance programmes, and effectively use sport in efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

If we are able to replace battlefields and theatres of conflict with stadiums, fields and scenarios in which rivalries can be diluted by competitive sport and where tolerance nourishes coexistence, we will have created a less hostile world and opportunities for peace.

Mrs. Dunlop (Brazil): Allow me at the outset to commend the work of the Group of Friends of Sport for Development and Peace at the United Nations, headed by the delegations of Monaco and Tunisia, which is aimed at strengthening the role of sports as a means to promote citizenship and friendship, which is within the reach of us all.

These efforts are closely aligned with the major initiatives and programmes undertaken by various Member States and international organizations for the advancement of sports in an integrated manner, consistent with accomplishments in the social fields.

For Brazilians, an exciting sports-centred decade has just begun. Over the next five years, Brazil will host three sporting mega-events: the Confederations Cup, in 2013; the International Federation of Association Football (FIFA) World Cup, in 2014; and the Olympic and Paralympic Games, in 2016. During this decade, sports will be at the top of our national agenda, adding value across our social, political, economic and cultural policies.

These sporting events will not only enhance relations with our partners both regionally and worldwide, but will first and foremost bring together the international community around a celebration of the values enshrined in the United Nations Charter.

The Brazilian Government is well aware that these sporting mega-events involve extensive preparation processes and complex operations. We are warming up to meet these challenges.

In 2014, Brazil will host the FIFA World Cup for the second time since the first post-war tournament, in 1950. We are an ethnically diverse society, unified by a single language that is spoken over more than 8.5 million km^2. We are now almost 200 million people who live together peacefully and at peace with our neighbours. We are proud of our consolidated democracy and of our sustainable, growing economy as a means of overcoming historical inequalities and improving the quality of life of all Brazilians.

Rio de Janeiro is greatly honoured to host the 2016 Olympic and Paralympic Games. The Games are the single biggest sporting event ever staged in the city. It is estimated that its opening ceremony alone will be watched by more than 4 billion people. Rio de Janeiro is taking on the challenge and plans to develop innovative and sustainable practices to address carbon and energy use; water services and waste management; and air quality and rational transportation. The Games will certainly be a catalyst for making Rio more beautiful and hospitable.

The tangible legacy of these sporting events will be stadiums, arenas, urban mobility infrastructure, telecommunications systems, and port and airport facilities. Yet the social legacy will have other enduring features, including the positiv impact on the self-esteem of the Cariocas, the gains in education and training provided by the events experience, the strengthening of volunteering programmes and their work with underprivileged youth and elderly persons, the dissemination of a sports-oriented culture and social inclusion through sports, the improvements attained in the fields of health and safety, and increased economic activity.

Pursuant to the recommendations contained in the resolution entitled "Sport as a means to promote education, health, development and peace" (resolution 65/4), adopted last year with our support and co-sponsorship, Brazil is currently developing sports cooperation projects in partnership with several developing countries and remains open to expanding the scope of those programmes with the international community and in cooperation with United Nations agencies and programmes.

We particularly want to commend the United Kingdom Mission to the United Nations for its

initiative, of which we were a sponsor since the beginning, to submit the draft resolution on "Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal", better known as the "Olympic Truce" draft resolution. A similar project will be submitted by Brazil in a timely manner in preparation for the Summer Olympic Games of 2016. We are also grateful for the cooperation rendered by the United Kingdom in connection with the project "London 2012 and Rio 2016: Olympic sustainability exchange".

The Brazilian Government is committed to fostering and adopting public policies aimed at ensuring that hosting these sporting events will promote development and social inclusion, as we believe that sports can be an important means of achieving these goals.

Mr. León González (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Sports represents an important aspect of development at both the national and international levels. Cuba believes that sports definitely strengthens solidarity and friendship among peoples, which are essential components in the promotion of peace, development and cooperation among nations.

Sports is one of the most effective ways of fostering the well-being and health of our citizens. However, these benefits will not be available to all if we continue to commercialize sports as just another business and one that is available only to a small minority.

Beginning with the triumph of the Cuban revolution in 1959, sports ceased to be an exclusive activity in our country; it became the right of all people. This has allowed our country to register major successes in regional and international competitions, despite being a small developing State. Just to cite a few examples, since 1971 Cuba has held strong in second place at the Pan-American Games, and for several decades we have been among the top 10 countries at the Olympic Games. We have 69 medals in these Games, and we hold 21 world records.

In the context of exercising the right to sports, we have set up an educational system that incorporates physical education as part and parcel of shaping human beings at all stages of life. We are working to provide sports training to children from a very young age, which allows us to develop the talents of those that stand out as future athletes and achieve the major sports accomplishments that we have in the international arena.

We also oppose the holding of sports activities for money's sake. Thus we condemn the theft of sporting talent of which the developing countries are the victims. For years, the Cuban sports movement, led by the Cuban Olympic Committee and the National Institute for Sports, Physical Education and Recreation, has engaged in selfless cooperation with many countries of the South by providing technical experts, professors and coaches who unassumingly, on the basis of bilateral agreements, offer new methods for sports training that have positive results and popularize sports, in addition to developing strong bonds of friendship and brotherhood among peoples.

We have also strengthened international cooperation by making available to the countries of the South our Institute for Sports Medicine and our Anti-Doping Laboratory. Our goal is to contribute to the fight against the scourge of drugs and doping, which are contrary to the ideals of sport, corrupt athletes and trainers and impede fair play. In that regard, we underscore the traditional opposition of Cuban athletes, at all levels and in all sports, to that illegal practice.

Cuba founded the International School for Physical Education and Sports to train professionals, who, in keeping with a fundamental principle of solidarity, can return home to transform physical education and sport in their countries.

Cuba welcomes the Pan-American Games, which are being held now in Guadalajara, Mexico — with a large Cuban delegation participating. We also wish the greatest success to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in hosting the upcoming London Olympic Games in 2012. We want to underscore, too, that developing countries also deserve to host important international events, including the Olympic Games, the single most important international forum for brotherhood and solidarity through sport, free of commercial interests. We know that the 2016 Olympics in Rio de Janeiro will represent a success for the entire South.

If we promote international solidarity, including through the Olympic ideal, all the weapons created by civilization will be rendered superfluous. Let us promote and sow ideas. Let us all share the hope that a

better, more just and equitable world of solidarity is possible.

Mr. Ong (Singapore): Singapore will welcome the successful adoption of draft resolution A/66/L.3, entitled "Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal". Singapore is pleased to sponsor this meaningful draft resolution.

Much has been said about how sport can play a crucial role in the efforts of the United Nations to improve the lives of people around the world. It builds bridges between individuals and across communities, creating fertile ground for sowing the seeds of camaraderie and peace. By promoting a philosophy of life based on the Olympic values of striving for excellence, demonstrating respect and celebrating friendship, Olympism shows that sport can help to build a better world. By promoting friendly rivalry through competitive sport rather than combat, since their inception the Olympic Games have been associated with promoting peace. Today, the Games enjoy a very important symbolic value in that regard.

Singapore is very honoured to associate ourselves with the Olympic Movement through our hosting of the inaugural Youth Olympic Games from 14 to 26 August 2010. The Youth Games, brainchild of International Olympic Committee (IOC) President Jacques Rogge, aims to inspire and engage a young generation that is increasingly spending less time on sport. "Inspiring youth, sporting Singapore" — those four simple words express the essence of the Youth Games in Singapore. From the start, the vision for the Youth Games was an event filled with unforgettable experiences, which would inspire all 3,530 youth athletes, and their families and communities, to embrace, embody and express the Olympic values of excellence, friendship and respect in their lives. The Youth Games also emphasized learning Olympic values through sport and applying those values to life beyond sport. The message was clear: Everyone can make the world better — no deed is too small.

In organizing the Youth Games in Singapore, the intention was to create something of value to the Olympic Movement and the youth of the world. Our motto, "Inspiring youth", therefore took on a double meaning. The Games would inspire young people; at the same time, the young people themselves would inspire others through their spirit, character and physical talent. That led the Singapore Youth Games Organizing Committee and its partners to create innovative initiatives that would commemorate not only victories but also participation.

The Culture and Education Programme, a defining element of the Youth Games, which comprised over 50 interactive activities — along the lines of the five educational themes of Olympism of skills development, well-being, healthy lifestyle, social responsibility and expression — provided opportunities for the athletes to learn more about the host country and each other's culture and history. The Programme highlighted the value of understanding and appreciating different backgrounds and societies and of building and sustaining friendships that can flourish across borders. When our youth develop their confidence, belief and determination to succeed on the playing field and then champion those values and convictions to make a positive impact in their communities, they will inspire the building of a better and more peaceful world.

The Youth Games is a living and colourful laboratory for some of life's most enduring lessons. At the Youth Games in Singapore, Britain's gymnast Sam Oldham showed tenacity by winning gold despite a surprise loss earlier in the competition. The likes of Singapore's Rainer Ng and Jordan's Dana Touran — both silver medallists, in swimming and Taekwondo, respectively — showed that smaller nations can make a large impression too. Athletes like China's Gu Yuting and Tunisia's Adem Hmam, who teamed up in table tennis, learned what it meant to work across cultures, achieving a well-deserved bronze medal. England's volunteer Aisha Naibe-wey won deserved praise for marching over 160 kilometres to raise funds for her trip to Singapore, while 82-year-old Ajit Singh, Singapore's oldest torchbearer, learned that youth was eternal.

Our delegation looks forward to many more inspiring tales of passion and hope at future Games. In particular, the XXX Olympic Summer Games and the XIV Paralympic Summer Games in London next year are special to many Singaporeans, as the 117th IOC session, which elected the host city for the Games, was held in Singapore. We are confident that the United Kingdom will spare no effort in its preparations for the Games in the coming months. We would like to extend to the London Organizing Committee our best wishes for the success of the Olympic Games.

Mr. Kodama (Japan): At the outset, I would like to commend the United Kingdom for promoting this year's draft resolution (A/66/L.3) on the Olympic Truce. Such resolutions have become a valued tradition of the General Assembly. As a sponsor, Japan strongly supports the spirit of the draft resolution, as expressed in its title, to "Build a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal". We firmly believe that the Olympic and Paralympic Games, to be hosted by London next year, will achieve the ideals and objectives of the draft resolution.

Last August, the Basic Act on Sport entered into force in Japan. The text of the Act starts with the phrase, "Sport is a universal culture of all humankind". The objectives of the Act are to stipulate basic ideas on sport and promote comprehensive and planned policies on sport, thereby contributing to developing the physical and mental health of the people and to achieving a vibrant society and the harmonious development of international society.

In that regard, I would like to mention the Japanese women's football team, well-known as Nadeshiko Japan and the winner of this year's Fédération internationale de football Women's World Cup, held in Germany. Their best play on the pitch gave great hope and encouragement to people who facing difficult situations in the aftermath of the great earthquake and tsunamis in Japan. Nadeshiko Japan disseminated a video message expressing to the world the heartfelt thanks of the people of Japan for its support and solidarity, both through donations and by other means. That is the power of sport that we believe in.

The principles of the Basic Act on Sports include promoting an environment for persons with disabilities to participate voluntarily and actively in sport, with the necessary consideration given to the different types and levels of disabilities. Another important principle of the Act is to contribute to enhancing mutual understanding among peoples and countries, as well as international peace. Those principles are exactly in line with those of the draft resolution on the Olympic Truce to be adopted today. Based on those principles, the Basic Act on Sports stipulates that, as a matter of policy, central and local authorities shall make efforts to give advantages to persons with disabilities in sports facilities, as well as to contribute to international understanding and peace by taking the necessary measures to promote exchanges at the international level through the contribution of sport.

Finally, Tokyo has made an official bid to host the 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games. If the bid is successful, the Government of Japan will use that opportunity to further develop and strengthen the spirit of the General Assembly's resolution on the Olympic Truce.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): It is no exaggeration to say that sport is the universal human language. Its role as an ambassador for peace is extremely important, in particular when it is endowed with the noble traditions of the Olympic Truce. The importance we attach to raising future generations in a culture of peace, non-violence and tolerance shows that the Olympic ideal has lost none of its relevance, and indeed has become more significant than ever before.

The Russian Federation attaches great importance to further enhanced international cooperation in sport so as to overcome national and religious enmity, to promote mutual understanding between peoples and to achieve intercivilizational harmony. We firmly believe that support for sport, including at the Government level, can be important in bringing the global community together and reaffirming the ideals and values of the sporting movement.

We welcome the call by the International Olympic Committee for an Olympic Truce so as to achieve reconciliation in regional conflicts during and after the Olympic Games. In that connection, the Russian Federation has always been a sponsor of, and wholly supports, the draft resolution entitled "Building a peaceful and better world through sports and the Olympic ideal" (A/66/L.3). We call on everyone to observe the Olympic Truce.

Building sporting links with other countries is an important part of the Russian Federation's foreign policy, as well as a matter of unwavering focus for our leadership. Encouraging as many people as possible to participate in sport and physical education is a priority in my country. We believe that sport is an excellent way to instil in young people the values of respect, tolerance and rejection of xenophobia — which is particularly important today. Sport can also protect young people from destructive influences, such as terrorism. We believe that sport should develop according to its own laws, that it should not depend on

the political environment and that it should never be used for intrigue or blackmail.

Our country is working hard to support the international and national Olympic and Paralympic Movements. We facilitate broad-based participation by our athletes in major international competitions. We are taking steps to further strengthen cooperation with national, regional and international sporting federations, organizations and clubs. This coordination is giving added impetus to the development of physical education and sport in our country. It also makes it possible for us to make creative use of our cutting-edge experience.

As the Assembly is Aware, the Russian city of Sochi was selected to host the XXII Olympic Winter Games and the XI Paralympic Winter Games in 2014. We see the selection of Sochi as recognition by the international community of the achievements of Russian sport and of our success in the socio-economic and political development of our country in recent years.

In order to ensure the adequate preparations for the Olympics and Paralympics, we have amended Russian legislation as appropriate. We have established organizational bodies and are carrying out construction work on Olympic facilities. For our country, it is not just a matter of effectively organizing the largest international sporting event in recent times, but to ensure the continued economic and social development of the entire region and build new world-class winter sports facilities. In organizing the Olympiad, we are carefully studying and applying experience of other countries, both future and previous organizers of Olympic and Paralympic Games.

The Russian Federation attaches great importance to preserving the unique natural environment of the city of Sochi and improving the environment in the region where the Games will take place. It is no accident that in the call for bids the Russian Federation imposed more than 200 unique environmental obligations on contractors. In addition, in line with the views of international environmental organizations, we have decided to move the sites of many Olympic facilities to other locations.

In 2010, we saw the beginning of the longest-ever cultural Olympiad, which will involve a year of cinema, theatre, music and museums. The goal is to showcase the diversity of Russia's multi-ethnic and multifaceted culture, to achieve maximum participation in this event by Russians and to ensure that people feel that the Games belong to them.

Mr. Meek (United States of America): The United States welcomes the General Assembly's consideration today of agenda item 11, entitled "Sport for peace and development", as well as the draft resolution entitled "Building a peaceful and better world through sport and Olympic ideal" (A/66/L.3), of which the United States is an enthusiastic sponsor.

When we meet at international sporting events, the outcome of who wins or who loses is not nearly as important as the goodwill of participation. That is why the sponsors of the draft resolution urge everyone to reaffirm the observance of the Olympic Truce, the ancient tradition of calling for safe passage and participation for athletes and other persons at the Games, thereby mobilizing the youth of the world to the cause of peace. Since 1993, when it was first introduced, this biennial draft resolution has become the most sponsored General Assembly resolution in history.

Today, our goal is to continue to send a strong message of peace and international goodwill to the youth of the world. Sport is a truly global initiative that extends into the lives of all people, be they rich or poor, at peace or at war. Sport teaches us to be humble in victory, gracious in defeat, compassionate towards competitors, tolerant and appreciative of diversity. Moreover, international athletic competitions generate a deep sense of national pride while fostering a spirit of international solidarity.

Sport exchanges have become among the most popular exchanges in the United States Government's people-to-people exchange programmes. Our sport diplomacy builds on Secretary of State Clinton's vision of smart power diplomacy, which embraces the use of a full range of diplomatic tools, including sport, to bring people together. Through the State Department's sport exchanges, young people have discovered how success in athletics builds the self-confidence and skills required for achievement in life.

The United States will continue to reach out to youth around the world with the message of America's commitment to international understanding, cultural tolerance and mutual respect. Sport exercises a deep hold on human imagination. Sport transcends all perceived ethnic, age, gender, religious and ability

barriers. Sports reminds us of our common humanity. We will continue to look for ways to partner with civil society and the private sector to focus on sports as a means of promoting intercultural post-conflict and peacebuilding dialogues. Cultural exchanges and United States development assistance programmes will create positive change in global communities through sports. United States Agency for International Development missions have already seen the tremendous positive impact that sports can have through the adoption of sports-based programmes to help youth learn skills, develop confidence and help build communities in several least developed countries.

The United States delegation looks forward to the adoption of today's draft resolution. It also will uphold and honour the Olympic Truce, routinely proclaimed by the President of the General Assembly and the Secretary-General for a few months, prior to the London 2012 Games.

Ms. Mezad (Israel): Throughout history, sport has served as a common language for the nations of the world. Sport fosters friendship, cooperation and harmony. It transcends our differences and reminds us of our commonality. It requires basic human values such as honour, teamwork and tolerance. As Israel's President, Shimon Peres, once said:

> "No matter if you're black or white; Muslim, Christian, Buddhist or Jewish; a man or a woman; sport is a world where you can compete without hating, where you win without killing."

Sport serves as a powerful tool to promote peace, tolerance and understanding in places of tension. It brings people together across boundaries, cultures and religions. Israel seeks to build new and lasting bridges and promote peaceful coexistence among the diverse people that make up our society, particularly between Jewish and Arab youth. The Israeli non-governmental organization Mifalot oversees more than 300 projects that use soccer to foster cohesive communities within Israeli society. Mifalot's annual sporting event brings together 20,000 young persons from Israel, the Palestinian territories and Jordan as part of an effort to change perceptions and stereotypes. The event promotes acceptance, understanding and respect. Following its remarkable success in Israel, the programme has expanded to Cameroon, Jordan, Rwanda and Haiti.

Through its activities in hundreds of educational and community frameworks, Mifalot instils moral, social and educational values among youth. It helps to improve their self-image, develop communication skills and provide them with a sense of belonging.

Sport has also been a powerful tool for progress and development. It has played an important role in advancing the Millennium Development Goals, including the promotion of gender equality. Mifalot has used sport to promote gender equality in minority communities by developing programmes for the empowerment of women. For example, in Bedouin villages in southern Israel, programmes targeting young girls have proved to be highly effective in improving their self-confidence.

Israel prides itself on its accomplishments in the area of sport for peace and hopes to expand those initiatives to other communities around the world. We are proud to be one of the sponsors of draft resolution A/66/L.3, entitled "Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal", which is to be adopted by the General Assembly today. Israel's interest in using sport to promote peace was reflected in the active role that we played in the negotiations for this draft. In particular, we brought forward additional language on the leadership of Olympic and Paralympic athletes and their special role in promoting peace through sport and the Olympic ideal. Athletes embody the spirit of the Olympic ideal. They can be extremely influential as role models and ambassadors for peace, and their global popularity can be used as a powerful communication platform to promote a culture of peace.

Unfortunately, not all sporting events have followed the principles laid out by the United Nations Office on Sport for Development and Peace. While it is painful to mention, we must recall the 1972 Olympic Games in Munich and the terrorists that broke into the Olympic village and killed 11 Israeli athletes, coaches and referees. The memory of that inhumane act is still felt in Israel. Today my country continues to take very significant security measures to protect our athletes abroad. It is also crucial to mention Israelis' exclusion from certain sport leagues; this exclusion represents a direct contradiction of the ideals that we speak of today.

Finally, on behalf of my country, I would like to thank the United Nations Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Sport for Development and

Peace, Mr. Wilfried Lemke, for his important work in encouraging dialogue, collaboration and partnership around sport for development and peace. We were honoured to host him in Israel last month.

Israel is proud of its competitive yet respectful approach to all international sporting events, and we hope that the upcoming summer Olympic Games in London will represent the true essence of sport as a way to promote tolerance and coexistence.

Israel, through its words and actions, strongly supports the concept of sport for peace and development, as well as the Olympic ideal. We call on the nations of the world to join together in these efforts. We view sport as essential for the promotion of peace and coexistence in our own State, the Middle East and the rest of the international community.

Ms. Picco (Monaco) (*spoke in French*): In 284 and 317 days, respectively, London will host the XXX Olympic Games and the XIV Paralympic Games. Countless millions of us will experience once again that particular emotion we feel at seeing hundreds of athletes entering the stadium behind their country's flag, just before one of them lights the Olympic flame in a solemn and unique gesture that unites us all.

Olympians, be they world-class athletes or ordinary participants, tell us of a unique experience, a joint human adventure full of enthusiasm in which overcoming one's personal limits and belonging to a community give the Olympic ideal its unceasingly renewed relevance — the spirit of the Games.

The lofty values of the Games, enshrined in the Olympic ideal that is being celebrated by the General Assembly today, are the same ones that should inspire our actions in favour of development and peace to achieve more equitable world for present and future generations.

The record number of sponsors for draft resolution A/66/L.3, entitled "Building a peaceful and better world through sports and the Olympic ideal", reflects the resolve to observe and defend the Olympic Truce, to be held from 27 July to 9 September 2012.

I wish in this respect to congratulate the delegation of the United Kingdom and the London 2012 Organizing Committee.

Let us try together to meet our commitments and to silence our weapons and end all violence for 45 days, for the benefit of the millions of civilians affected by conflict and the international community as a whole. By together upholding the Olympic ideal and by stepping up our efforts to put sport at the service of peace and development, we are consolidating the principles and values enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, to which we all committed ourselves to respecting when we became Members of the Organization.

In a world where disasters and crises affect development and peace, international sporting events are becoming increasingly successful. They bring peoples together and teach tolerance. I wish to congratulate our friends from New Zealand on the success of the Rugby World Cup, which will end on 23 October, and to note that on the World Cup webpage there is a link to the World Food Programme (WFP), as since 2003 the International Rugby Federation has been working with the WFP to fight hunger.

The growing success of sporting events and their impact across the world is reflected in the participation figures for the twenty-second Sportel conference, a professional sports fair for television and new media held in Monaco in 2011. A total of 2,330 participants from 67 countries and 970 companies attended, making this year's professional fair on sports media for buyers, broadcasters and advertisers the largest in the past 10 years.

On 9 May, the Principality of Monaco signed the International Agreement for the Establishment of the University for Peace in Costa Rica, in the context of cooperation between the organization Peace and Sport, the International University of Monaco and the University for Peace. Since September, the innovative partnership between these three entities has offered a multidisciplinary training programme towards a master's degree in sustainable peace through sport, which includes rigorous academic instruction on the peacekeeping process as well as an apprenticeship in field skills in conflict-affected zones and regions afflicted by extreme poverty and a lack of social cohesion.

In my capacity as co-Chair of the Group of Friends of Sport, I should like to thank Mr. Wilfried Lemke, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Sport for Development and Peace, for his unfailing commitment to promoting efforts on the ground and cementing partnerships.

We commend the growing involvement of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in United Nations efforts to meet the Millennium Development Goals and welcome the presence here today of the Permanent Observer and Vice-President of the Committee, Mr. Mario Pescante.

Before concluding, I would like to congratulate Singapore and the IOC on organizing the Youth Olympic Games in the summer of 2010, at which 3,600 young athletes aged between 14 and 16, of whom 46 per cent were girls, took part in high-level competition, mixed events and those where the teams were made up of athletes of different nations competing together in various sports, but also participating in a cultural and educational programme designed to disseminate the Olympic values, social responsibility and expression through digital media.

Getting to know the importance of hard work at a very young age, respect for others and the role of the individual in society led Her Serene Highness Princess Charlene of Monaco to become a Global Ambassador and member of the International Board of Directors of the Special Olympics, a movement synonymous with integration and respect for differences that encourages and supports those with intellectual disabilities, promoting tolerance for all and facilitating understanding and respect around the world through sport activities. The latest Special Olympics World Summer Games, which took place in Athens in July, bringing together 7,500 athletes from 185 countries supported by 25,000 volunteers, helped demonstrate the power of sport and its ability to promote inclusion and social cohesion.

Mr. Jerandi (Tunisia) (*spoke in French*): I would first like to express my delegation's appreciation of the Secretary-General's 2010 report entitled "Sport for development and peace: strengthening the partnerships" (A/65/270). I commend the efforts made by the United Nations in that regard, including, in particular, by the United Nations Office on Sport for Development and Peace.

I would also like to emphasize my delegation's appreciation for the ongoing, unflagging efforts of Mr. Wilfried Lemke, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Sport for Development and Peace, with whom the Group of Friends of Sport for Development and Peace spoke this morning at a very useful and informative meeting held at the initiative of the Group's Chair, the Permanent Representative of Monaco, to whom I pay tribute for her dynamism and efforts. I would also like to thank Mr. Mario Pescante, Permanent Observer of the International Olympic Committee, for his dedication to the cause of sport and his valuable contribution to this ideal.

Today, sport has become part of the DNA of the United Nations and an effective tool that should henceforth be included among the major topics addressed by the Organization, as we saw during the negotiations on the outcome document of the High-level Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals (resolution 65/1). I would like to reiterate Tunisia's resolve to continue its efforts designed to make sport, through its capacity for communication and rapprochement, a powerful channel for integration and development both nationally and internationally, as well as a means of promoting solidarity, tolerance and cultural and human diversity. I would also like to commend the attention that the Member States as a whole have given to sport and their appreciation of its universal character as a tool for promoting peace, development, education and health.

I wish to take advantage of this opportunity to warmly congratulate South Africa on its successful conduct of the 2010 World Cup, as well as to the Government of Canada for the success of the XXI Olympic Winter Games and the X Paralympic Winter Games, held in Vancouver. These events highlighted sport's ability to bring people together and to act as a catalyst for friendship and the spirit of sportsmanship among athletes and fans, whatever their origins, nationalities or beliefs.

Given the nobility of sport and its vital contribution to the emergence of new generations thirsting for physical and mental well-being, Tunisia would like to take this opportunity to urge Member States to pursue every possible measure necessary to deal with the menace of doping, which endangers both athletes' health and sport's image and credibility. We welcome the growing number of Member States that have signed the International Convention against Doping in Sport, the chief world instrument for combating this dangerous scourge, adopted at the 2005 UNESCO General Conference.

We must also ensure that young people are educated on the ethics of sport through educational systems and civil society associations and

organizations, so that sport arenas and events are not used to express slogans steeped in the vocabulary of racism, xenophobia and the rejection of others.

In order to foster that dynamic and to make sport a means for promoting universal principles for future generations, I am pleased to congratulate the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland on its draft resolution entitled "Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal" (A/66/L.3), as they organize the XXX Olympic Summer Games and the XIV Paralympic Summer Games, to be held in London in 2012. The draft resolution affirms respect for the Olympic Truce and the ideals of the United Nations and the Olympic Movement, namely, friendship among peoples, harmony, non-violence and non-discrimination — in other words, the uniting ideals and common denominators of the universal principles that bring us all together in the Hall.

I hope that all Member States will support the draft resolution, thereby sending a strong message to all those who work for the noble practice of sport and greatly encouraging every athlete.

Mr. Tsymbaliuk (Ukraine): Ukraine has traditionally recognized the value of sport in building a peaceful and better world and promoting tolerance, equality and understanding among people and nations. Sport is a shared public good that can, through its unique convening power, bring people together irrespective of their race, religion, political opinion or gender. The Government of Ukraine believes firmly in the potential of sport to contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and to make a real difference in people's lives, including for the most vulnerable groups.

Today more than ever, sport and physical activities take on growing significance in the context of health security. The General Assembly High-level Meeting on the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases, recently held in New York, recognized the threat of such diseases, which constitutes one of the major challenges for development in the twenty-first century. The Meeting also provided us with strong evidence of the important role that sport and physical activity play in preventing the most prevalent of those diseases.

In Ukraine, sport and physical education are considered from the broader perspective of promoting healthy lifestyles. This constitutes a strategic priority of Government policy. We believe that using holistic multisectoral approaches for sport can be a most effective way to help achieve the MDGs, including those on health and education.

For its part, Ukraine is committed to promoting sport as a means to advancing peace and development in the world. My country is considering the possibility of submitting a bid to host the 2022 Olympic and Paralympic Games in the Carpathian region.

I am pleased to note that in June of next year my country and Poland will co-host the fourteenth championship of the Union des Associations Européennes de Football — EURO 2012 — which will be the first such championship to be held in Eastern Europe. It is our sincere hope that this major event will renew the spirit of friendship and solidarity in the region, contributing to social progress and economic development as a whole.

In its efforts to make EURO 2012 a real celebration of football, Ukraine has launched a number of ambitious projects to construct the necessary sport facilities and infrastructure that meet the highest international standards.

We also consider EURO 2012 as an opportunity to enhance the potential of Ukrainian youth in meeting social challenges and raising their awareness, confidence and sense of responsibility. For example, the Sport and Youth Service of Ukraine has initiated a campaign on the theme "Let's do it together" to encourage interpersonal communication, healthy lifestyles and violence prevention. It also aims at organizing a series of different sporting events for children and youth, as well as building the necessary capacity.

Guided by the noble ideals and principles of the Paralympic Movement, Ukraine attaches particular importance to the use of sport as a means to rehabilitate persons with disabilities and enhance their social inclusion. The Ukraine Centre for Physical Education and Sport for Persons with Disabilities is a unique State institution that encompasses 27 regional centres, 106 local offices and 26 sport schools for children with disabilities. More than 51,000 persons with disabilities actively practice sport and use it for the purposes of rehabilitation. Ukraine is proud of our athletes with disabilities and our paralympians. Our

national team won fourth place at the 2008 Paralympic Summer Games, held in Beijing.

We emphasize the importance of the mass media in raising awareness on the values of sport and healthy lifestyles and increasing physical activity among the entire population. In that regard, our National Olympic Committee has initiated work to set up a national sport channel in Ukraine.

My delegation commends the efforts of the United Nations Office on Sport for Development and Peace aimed at advocating sport as a tool to achieve peacebuilding, development and humanitarian objectives. We express our full support for its activities.

We would also like to thank the United Kingdom for introducing the draft resolution entitled "Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal" (A/66/L.3), which Ukraine is pleased to sponsor.

Mr. Hassan (Yemen) (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of my Government, I would first like to express our appreciation to the Member States that have become sponsors of the important draft resolution before the Assembly, entitled "Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal" (A/66/L.3). That is especially significant given that the United Kingdom is to host the XXX Olympic Summer Games in 2012. The United Kingdom also had a major role in 1948, when it also hosted the Olympics and promoted the idea of participation in the Games by persons with spinal injuries, becoming a pioneer in that respect.

I should like to point out that football flourished in my country during the 1950s and early 1960s. Aden led the Arabian peninsula at the time that the United Kingdom was present in the southern part of my country. In that regard, in spite of our scarce resources, we have sought to encourage every sort of sport.

The participation of the Vice-President of the International Olympic Committee in our meeting today is proof of the importance of this subject and serves to enhance the culture of peace throughout the world.

The fact that many Member States have embraced this draft resolution is proof that sports and the Olympic ideals are a contributing factor in affirming the values and principles of sport as a way to help young people to develop their potential, provided that sports are never politicized or monopolized by a certain country.

Mr. Haron (Malaysia): We are all from different nationalities, languages, backgrounds and cultures. We each have distinct modalities and approaches in making our world and our communities safe, content and dynamic, ensuring education and employment, health and social services and, most important, creating peaceful communities where we may live without conflict or fear. Despite our diversity, we come together to recognize that we all speak a single language and that we all share a single, simple to use and yet powerful tool, that is, sport.

Sport has a unique power to attract, mobilize and inspire. By its very nature, sport is about participation. It is about social inclusion. It stands for human values such as the acceptance of binding rules and discipline, teamwork and fairness. However, it can be more than that. Sport plays a significant role as a promoter of social integration and economic development in different geographical, cultural and political contexts. Sport is an influential instrument for strengthening social ties and networks and for promoting the ideals of peace, fraternity, solidarity, non-violence, tolerance and, not least, justice.

Malaysia considers itself a young nation, and it is fair to see sport as an agent of change and catalyst of our successful nation-building process. Since our independence, sport has contributed to developing the spirit of Malaysia as a nation and has promoted national integration among multiracial groups. In sports, nationalism serves as a natural framework for unifying people and is invaluable in consolidating Malaysia's multiracial society. In order to fully harness sport's potential in that context, appropriate national policies, investments and capacities are needed to support and, where appropriate, scale up national programmes. At the national level, Governments must be aware of the power of sport to help meet their domestic development goals and the importance of integrating sport into their development strategies and approaches.

Based on foresight and a belief in sports' transformational potential, Prime Minister Dato' Sri Mohd Najib bin Tun Haji Abdul Razak, who was Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports in 1988, spearheaded the formulation of the National Sport Policy in order to implement various projects to

inculcate patriotism in the citizens. Sports programmes and cultural activities were planned to create a deep-rooted national feeling of unity among multiracial groups and were applauded as a large-scale extension of a feeling of togetherness and unity. On the way forward, the Sport Development Act of 1997 was enacted to further stipulate guidelines on sports development in order to promote and mainstream the development and administration of sport in Malaysia. Those initiatives have only one aim — developing a more prosperous, healthy and united community.

Malaysia supports the promotion of sport for persons with disabilities as a crucial step in changing attitudes and building community support. In Malaysia, many local projects include community education, which is also important at the international level. With regard to public awareness of inclusivity, paralympics are not defined by disability, but by opportunity and fierce competition. They are defined by the strengthening of friendship, sincerity, camaraderie and what it means to be human.

Malaysia has been taking part in international disability sports competitions since the early 1970s, including multisport and multidisability competitions, single-disability competitions and single-sport competitions. We have hosted various international events including the first Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Para Games in 2001 and the ninth Far East and South Pacific Games for the Disabled in 2006. Malaysia is also honoured to be one of the founders of the ASEAN Para Sports Federation in 2000 and the Asian Paralympic Council in 2002. The secretariats of both organizations are based in Kuala Lumpur, our capital city.

Malaysia is a strong believer that achieving success at the international level acts as an inspiration that conveys a message to the international community of greater solidarity, social cohesion and peaceful coexistence worldwide. In that regard, Malaysia is proud to mention here that the years 2010 and 2011 have been extraordinary for the Olympic Council of Malaysia and the Malaysian sport arena overall. Malaysia participated in five multisport games, namely, the first Youth Olympic Games, held in Singapore, the XIX Commonwealth Games held in New Delhi, the sixteenth Asian Games organized in Guangzhou, China, in 2010, the second Asian Beach Games in Muscat, Oman, in 2010, and the seventh Asian Winter Games held in 2011 in Astana, Kazakhstan.

The Malaysian contingent has achieved very encouraging results, especially at the XIX Commonwealth Games held in New Delhi in October 2010, where Malaysia garnered 12 gold medals, 10 silver medals and 14 bronze medals, surpassing its record of 10 gold medals won at the Kuala Lumpur 1998 Commonwealth Games. Riding on the success of the Commonwealth Games in New Delhi, the Malaysian contingent to the sixteenth Asian Games held in Guangzhou in November 2010 won 9 gold medals, 18 silver medals and 14 bronze medals, bettering its record of 8 gold medals won in Doha at the fifteenth Asian Games held in 2006.

The next nine months will be another challenging and exciting period for Malaysia, as the main focus of the Olympic Council of Malaysia and the elite Malaysian athletes will be busy qualifying for the London 2012 Olympic Games. To celebrate the countdown to the 2012 Olympic and Paralympics Games to be held in London, in 2009 the Malaysian Government launched the Road to London 2012 and a nationwide campaign to promote widespread awareness and exposure of the programme.

While sport alone cannot prevent conflict or build peace, it can assist in peacebuilding interventions. Peacebuilding is a continuing process ranging from violence prevention to humanitarian relief and from early recovery to the long-term construction or reconstruction of society. Raising awareness and building support among political, community and civil society leaders and senior Government officials are critical first steps in mobilizing Government action around sport for development and peace. Through collaboration and cooperation, Governments should strengthen their efforts towards using sport to overcome development challenges and, in turn, achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

In short, Malaysia believes in the concept of sport for the development of peace. We have faith in the ability of sport to transcend socio-cultural and political boundaries and in its capacity as a powerful global communications platform. It has the potential to empower, motivate and inspire natural abilities and to draw on, develop and showcase individual strengths and competencies.

Mr. Tommo Monthe (Cameroon) (*spoke in French*): The agenda item under consideration today, entitled "Sport for peace and development: building a

peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal", represents quite an array of activities. It is embodied in draft resolution A/66/L.3, of which Cameroon is a sponsor.

There are only a few months remaining before the Olympic and Paralympic Games are held in London. Now, during the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly with its special theme of "The role of mediation in the settlement of disputes through peaceful means", the introduction at this juncture of this agenda item and this draft resolution, which has received broad-based support, points to the desire of the international community to set about building a better world through the Olympic ideal. My country, which owes its global renown to the sports policy pursued by our head of State, His Excellency Mr. Paul Biya, knows just how much it owes in terms in terms of international recognition to the achievements of our athletes in the international arena, particularly the Indomitable Lions of Cameroon.

Amateur sport and professional sport are not possible except in an environment of peace. While sport can point to peace, it can also bring about peace between people. This has been the case since the dawn of time, as we can see in Greek tradition, which has become universal today, with the Olympic Truce, which involved a cessation of hostilities for seven days before the Olympic Games and seven days after, in keeping with the instructions of the legendary oracle of Delphi, with a view to replacing the cycle of conflict every four years with a friendly athletic competition.

Another illustration, this time from more modern times, of the role of sport as a driver for peace is the fraternizing between Turkey and Armenia that resulted from a football match, which took place on the occasion of the first exchange of visits by the leaders of those countries in September 2008. We also saw the same friendly relations manifest in the support by the North Korean people for the South Korean team during its brilliant performance in 2002 World Cup competition, moving across physical barriers and political disagreements that have kept the two countries at odds for the past five decades.

Another eloquent example is the great unity and symbiosis created in South Africa's multiracial society in 1995 when that country's team won the Rugby World Cup only a year after the end of apartheid and despite the rancour and discrimination that were still rife in South Africa then.

In my own country, Cameroon, sport in general and football in particular, are a powerful factor for social cohesion, fraternity and national harmony — a bedrock of peace and development. Cameroon's conviction that sport can play a catalyzing role in peace and development was expressed on numerous occasions by our President of the Republic Paul Biya, and by our Minister for Foreign Affairs, most recently during 2010 celebration of the Days of Africa, just before the Soccer World Cup organized in South Africa.

The examples that I have just mentioned to illustrate the catalyzing role of sport show perfectly that the ideal of peace can indeed be achieved through sport. My country therefore joins its voice to that of all Member States and relevant stakeholders in the appeal launched by the draft resolution that we are about to adopt, so as to ensure that the Olympic Truce is respected in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the spirit of the ancient Olympics.

I would like to conclude by assuring the Assembly and the Secretary-General of the support and unwavering cooperation of my delegation.

Mr. Diallo (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): We meet here today, as tradition would have it, in the year before the Olympic Games in order to nourish our reflections on the dialectic that flows from the beautiful trio of sport, peace and development. From 27 July to 12 August and from 29 August to 9 September 2012 the world of sport will be together in the city of London to organize sporting events in celebration of the XXX Olympiad and the XIV Paralympic Games. It will no doubt be an important moment, one of the biggest human gatherings of the modern world, replete with symbols, teachings, experiences and high stakes.

As the Secretary-General said at the Sport for Peace and Development Forum in Geneva last May,

> "Sport has become a world language, a common denominator that breaks down all the walls, all the barriers ... It is a worldwide industry whose practices can have widespread impact".

Beyond the various sports activities that the youth of the world will be participating in when they visit London in a spirit of fair play, healthy

competitiveness, competition, a taste for victory, the joy and humility in victory and dignity in defeat, perseverance in effort, in short, sportsmanship, it is worth underscoring that this global athletic meeting is the irrefutable symbol of a true communion of our international community. That is the spirit that the pedagogue Pierre de Coubertin, the founding father of the modern Olympic Games, sought to confer on sport, an unrivalled activity of coming together and sharing, escape, high humour, addiction to the unexpected, and the notion of finding the right amount of effort to apply without expending unnecessary force. In this often too-tormented world, the Olympic Movement can provide hope and brotherhood and build bridges between continents, crossing social divides and political systems and regimes.

Senegal, a sponsor of draft resolution A/66/L.3, which we hope will be adopted, welcomes the great enthusiasm and international solidarity for promoting the ideals of peace everywhere and for all time through, in particular, sport.

As we call upon Member States to observe the Olympic Truce throughout the entire period from the opening ceremony to the closing ceremony of the Games, the international community seeks to renew its ambition to build a better world, using sport to forge friendships among athletes, youth and communities around the world. Such concerns, furthermore, are the bedrock of the Charter of the Organization.

Through the International Olympic Truce Foundation, the International Olympic Committee seeks, among other goals, to encourage the politicians of the world to work for peace. May the Olympic Truce that is symbolized by the dove placed before the Olympic flame always shine and fill our hearts, in an era characterized by fear of war and violence, with hope for the coming of a world of peace.

I would also like to express our country's full support for the welcome initiative launched by Mr. Hugh Robertson, Minister for Sport and the Olympics of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, called "International Inspiration", which is an ambitious programme that seeks to use the power of sport to enrich the lives of thousands of children and youth around the world, particularly in the developing world, by helping them to gain the skills they need to become positive sports role models and inspiration for their peers. It is on this note of hope that I would like to conclude — the hope that all Olympic activities may contribute to the ideals of peace, brotherhood and solidarity that our Organization holds so dear.

Ms. Alsaleh (Syria) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation wishes to join the consensus and sign up as a co-sponsor of draft resolution A/66/L.3, in light of the noble objectives and lofty expectations that all of us in the international community seek to fulfil . We firmly believe that sport has a significant role to play in promoting education, health, development and peace, as well as in building solidarity among peoples.

Between 24 September and 3 October 2010, Syria hosted the Paralympic Games, organized under the auspices of our First Lady. Many States participated, bringing nearly 2,000 athletes — men and women — to compete in 15 different Olympic sports.

At the same time, we believe that the draft resolution should not be used as a pretext to focus on building peace only occasionally. We believe that Member States need to focus on building a world of peace in all areas, under all circumstances and at all times in a manner that ensures respect for justice, rejection of foreign occupation and respect among all States, in conformity with the Charter.

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): I give the floor to the observer of the Holy See.

Archbishop Chullikatt (Holy See): As the General Assembly takes up agenda item 11 on sport for peace and development, my delegation recalls the important role of sport in promoting the comprehensive development of the human person and the construction of a truly human society, based on respect for the dignity of each and every person.

Next year the international community will come together to celebrate the Games of the XXX Olympiad and the XIV Paralympic Games in London. The Olympic Charter reminds us that the ultimate purpose of the Games is to place sport at the service of the harmonious development of human persons, with a view to promoting a peaceful society concerned with the preservation of human dignity. On this occasion, as the world prepares for those important events, we are reminded of the role of sport in the life of the human family.

Sport has notable educational potential, especially for young people, and for that reason it is of

great importance not only as recreation but also in the formation of the human person. Sport is among the means belonging to the common patrimony of humankind and that are agents for moral perfection and human formation. If that is true for sport activity in general, it is all the more so for that carried out in schools and sports associations, for the purpose of ensuring a human and value-based formation of new generations.

Sport pursued with passion and vigilant ethical sense becomes, especially for youth, training in healthy competitiveness and physical improvement. It can be a school of formation in human and spiritual values and a privileged means of personal growth and of contact with society. Sport can inculcate such important values as love of life, the spirit of sacrifice, fair play, perseverance, respect for others, friendship, sharing and solidarity.

To achieve those lofty objectives, sport nevertheless needs to discover its deepest ethos and comply with the basic principle of the primacy of the human person. In that regard, a healthy approach to sport must be adopted so that it is not practiced as an end in itself — in which case it risks becoming a vain and harmful idol — but is made a meaningful instrument for the comprehensive development of the person and the construction of a society suited to the human person. When understood in this way, sport is not an end but a means, and can become a vehicle of civility and genuine recreation, encouraging people to put the best of themselves on the field and to avoid what might be unreasonably dangerous or seriously harmful to themselves or others.

Through sport activities, the community can contribute to the formation of young people, offering an appropriate ambit for their human and spiritual growth. In fact, when they are directed to the integral development of the person and managed by qualified and competent personnel, sport initiatives reveal themselves to be propitious opportunities to become true and proper educators and teachers of life for young people.

It is therefore necessary that in our time — in which we see the urgent need to educate new generations — communities continue to support sport for young people so that they can fully appreciate competitive activity, including its positive aspects. Those include its capacity to stimulate competitiveness, courage and tenacity in the pursuit of objectives, while avoiding negative tendencies that can pervert its very nature.

The Olympic motto of *Citius, Altius, Fortius* — "Faster, Higher, Stronger" — not only reminds us of what is demanded of those participating in the upcoming Games, but also acts as an invitation to all persons to be more committed to the advancement of peace and development so as to build a better world.

May sport always be a valued building block of peace, solidarity and friendship among peoples and nations, so that it can truly make an effective contribution to peaceful understanding between peoples and to establishing a civilization rooted in love.

Before I conclude, allow me to offer my delegation's best wishes to the organizers and the host city of London for the success of the next Olympic and Paralympic Games.

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): In accordance with resolution 64/3, of 19 October 2009, I now call on the observer for the International Olympic Committee.

Mr. Pescante (International Olympic Committee) (*spoke in French*): The International Olympic Committee (IOC) conveys its compliments to the General Assembly. On behalf of the IOC, I am honoured to have this opportunity to discuss the Olympic Truce and the role of sport in promoting a more peaceful world.

Allow me first to thank those who have helped bring us to this point. The IOC expresses its gratitude in particular to the Government of the United Kingdom, to the colleagues of the organizing committee of the Olympic and Paralympic committees in London for having allowed these matters to be brought to the attention of the General Assembly as we move towards the XXX Olympiad and the games thereof next summer.

We are particularly grateful that this esteemed body has approved the Olympic Truce resolution entitled "Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal" before every edition of the Games since 1994. Cooperation between the IOC and the United Nations on this issue has helped build the foundation for our deep and growing partnership. The links between us have grown even stronger since

the General Assembly, at its sixty-fourth session, granted the IOC Permanent Observer status just two years ago.

Today we again request the Assembly's support for the Olympic Truce. I would also like to express our thanks to the Group of Friends of Sport. This informal group of Permanent Representatives from more than 40 United Nations Member States has played a leading role in support of the Olympic Truce and the broader effort to integrate sport into the work of the United Nations across a wide range of issues.

The draft resolution under consideration by the General Assembly today (A/66/L.3) is far more than a symbolic act. The Olympic Truce sends a powerful message that reaffirms the role of sport as an antidote to conflict. It is a message rooted in antiquity, but it is just as relevant in the age of the Internet as it was in ancient Greece.

(*spoke in English*)

Another world is possible, also thanks to sport and the Olympics. Centuries of history teach us this lesson. It was right at the start, in 776 B.C., on the occasion of the first games at Olympia, that the Olympic Truce was first proclaimed. The *polis*, the city-States of those times, which were even more bellicose than today's States, respected the sacred nature of the games. The great Greek historian Herodotus tells how even the battle of Thermopylae was delayed by the Olympic Games. This is our inheritance from distant times past. Another world is possible, thanks again to sport and the Olympic Games. That was the ideal that, at the end of the nineteenth century, fired the heart of Baron de Coubertin, who successfully dedicated his life and work to returning the Olympic Games to humanity.

During the last century, the Olympic Games did not stop wars; wars stopped the games, as occurred during the world conflicts that afflicted the twentieth century. Nonetheless, that spirit of peace, of encounter and of tolerance has remained the dominant impulse of Olympic action, a philosophy that some would characterize by the credo that "the important thing is to participate".

"Participate" is the verb that motivates all our activities — participate in competitions with full respect for the rules and for the opponent, who is never an enemy; and participate in the construction of a world that does not divide men and women or boys and girls on ethnic grounds or because of their language or religion, but which instead sees them as one, as they are here at the United Nations.

Sport and the Olympic Games tell the story of this union. Again and again the diplomacy of peace has used sports arenas of all sizes and shapes, from a ping-pong table, where a thaw in relations between America and China was negotiated, to a cricket pitch, where we are now witnessing the current rapprochement between India and Pakistan, to a football stadium, such as the one in Rome where Yasser Arafat and Shimon Peres, two Nobel Peace Prize winners, sat side by side in 2000 during a football match between Israel and Palestine, to the podium at the 2008 Beijing Games, where two mothers representing Georgia and Russia, two nations at war, embraced in a simple gesture as two women, not two enemies. We saw the same spirit at work in a parade of athletes, when a people divided by a border that had been invented by war joined together behind a single flag. Such was the case of Germany, united for the first time at the 1960 Rome Games, and later of Korea, which paraded with an athlete from the North and one from the South carrying the same flag at the 2000 Sydney Games.

This is not rhetoric, but rather the chronicles of what we have seen during the events that constitute the Olympic Games, which are uniquely global in these times of globalization.

Participate — that is what youth across the world are asking to do in these times of world crisis, as they bear witness to the thirst for freedom, democracy and peace that new technologies have spread across the globe. When they speak of values, these young men and women are not referring to stock exchange indexes.

I thank members for their support for the Olympic Truce. To those who have yet again seconded it, to those who are supporting it for the first time, thank you on behalf of the International Olympic Committee. I thank them, above all, on behalf of those millions of men and women, especially young people, who in whatever part of the world are suffering the grief, pain and ill-treatment caused by each and every war. We hope that, thanks to sport, they will find a little relief from their tragedies.

In closing, allow me to paraphrase the memorable sentence spoken by the first man to set foot on the

moon. The Olympic Truce is one small step for mankind, yet one giant leap for humankind.

I thank the United Nations for accomplishing that together with us and together with the Olympic Movement.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): We have heard the last speaker in the debate on agenda item 11 and its sub-item (a).

We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/66/L.3, entitled "Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal".

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Botnaru (Department of General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the submission of the draft resolution, and in addition to those delegations listed in A/66/L.3, the following countries have also become sponsors of the draft: Argentina, Bahamas, Bahrain, Barbados, Belarus, Bhutan, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Botswana, Brunei Darussalam, the Central African Republic, Chad, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Dominica, Equatorial Guinea, Ghana, Grenada, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mozambique, the Niger, the Philippines, Samoa, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Seychelles, South Sudan, Suriname, the Syrian Arab Republic, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uzbekistan, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Yemen and Zimbabwe.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): The Assembly will now take action on draft resolution A/66/L.3, entitled "Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal". May I take it that the Assembly wishes to adopt draft decision A/66/L.3 without a vote?

Draft resolution A/66/L.3 was adopted (resolution 66/5).

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the General Assembly, we wish every success to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in hosting the Olympic Summer Games next year.

The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 11 and its sub-item (a).

Mr. Zinsou (Benin), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Agenda item 15

Culture of peace

Report of the Secretary-General (A/66/280)

Note by the Secretary-General (A/66/273)

The Acting President: I wish to draw the attention of the General Assembly to the note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Director General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, circulated in document A/66/273.

I wish also to draw the attention of members to a letter dated 11 August 2011 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the General Assembly, transmitting the fourth annual report of the High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations, contained in document A/66/305.

Statement by the Acting President

The Acting President: The Constitution of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization states rightly that "since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed".

The unanimous adoption in 1999 by the General Assembly of the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace (resolution 53/243) was motivated by this very truth. In this respect, the General Assembly reaffirmed the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind. That historic, norm-setting document is considered one of the most significant legacies of the United Nations and one that will endure for generations.

By adopting the Declaration and Programme of Action, the United Nations took the lead in laying the foundation of sustainable world peace by focusing on the importance and the necessity of building a culture of peace. It stipulates that a culture of peace consists of values, attitudes and behaviours that reflect and inspire social interaction and sharing based on the principles of freedom, justice and democracy, all human rights, tolerance and solidarity; which reject violence and endeavour to prevent conflicts by tackling their root causes to solve problems through dialogue and

negotiation; and that guarantee the full exercise of all rights and the means to participate fully in the development process of society.

First and foremost, the Declaration called for full respect for the principles of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of States and non-intervention in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any State, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and international law; full respect for and promotion of all human rights and fundamental freedoms; a commitment to the peaceful settlement of conflicts; efforts to meet the development and environmental needs of present and future generations; respect for and the promotion of the right to development; respect for and the promotion of equal rights and opportunities for women and men; respect for and the promotion of the right of everyone to freedom of expression, opinion and information; and adherence to the principles of freedom, justice, democracy, tolerance, solidarity, cooperation, pluralism, cultural diversity, dialogue and understanding at all levels of society and among nations. All of these should be fostered by an enabling national and international environment that is conducive to peace.

The Programme of Action (resolution 53/243 B) provides us all with a clear set of guidelines for action. It is a truly universal document that transcends borders, cultures, beliefs and societies.

Last year, in its resolution 65/11 of 23 November 2010, entitled "Implementation of the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace", the General Assembly reiterated that

> "the objective of the effective implementation of the Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace was to strengthen further the global movement for a culture of peace following the observance of the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World, 2001-2010, and call[ed] upon all concerned to renew their attention to that objective" (*resolution 65/11, para. 1*).

The Programme of Action also emphasizes that civil society needs to be fully engaged in the fuller development of a culture of peace and that the educative and informative role of the media contributes to the promotion of a culture of peace. This special role of civil society, as well as that of the media and public information, will strengthen the global movement for the culture of peace with the wholehearted support of all.

The most significant way to promote a culture of peace is through peace education. Peace education needs to be accepted in all parts of the world and in all societies and countries as an essential element in creating a culture of peace.

In order to effectively meet the challenges posed by the ongoing complexities of our time, the young people of today deserve a radically different education that does not glorify war but educates for peace, non-violence and international cooperation. They need the skills and knowledge to create and nurture peace for their individual selves and for the world to which they belong.

We should never forget that there will be no peace without development and no development without peace. It is also crucial to remember that sustainable peace is inseparable from women's equality. The General Assembly has further urged the appropriate authorities to provide age-appropriate education. When women are marginalized, there is little chance for an open, participatory and peaceful society.

In today's world, the culture of peace should be seen as the essence of a new humanity — a new global civilization based on inner oneness and outer diversity. Let us commence our debate on agenda item 15 in that spirit.

Mr. Al Rashed (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): My country would like to wholeheartedly thank the Secretary-General for all of his efforts in preparing the report contained in document A/66/280 on the activities of the main United Nations entities in the field of intercultural, interreligious and intercivilizational dialogue. We wish to also thank the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) for the central role it plays and for all its efforts to strengthen and consolidate the culture a peace, creating conducive to fostering such a culture by implementing the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace (resolution 53/243).

The preamble to the United Nations Charter begins with "We the peoples of the United Nations", which means that although we have different

backgrounds, beliefs, civilizations and cultures, we all come together and join hands under the umbrella of the culture of humankind. The State of Kuwait therefore places tremendous emphasis on the importance of promoting a culture of peace and promoting dialogue among cultures, civilizations and faiths, particularly in the current conditions of intolerance, extremism and hatred among peoples, human rights violations, racial discrimination and disrespect for religions and their symbols.

We would like to draw attention to the fact that dialogue or alliance among civilizations does not require us to dissolve ourselves into one religion, culture or civilization. In other words, we must all live according to the same set of principles whereby we seek out the causes of our differences and try to address them, and in which the religious and cultural diversity of the peoples of the world is respected. We therefore call on this Organization to scale up all efforts to promote a culture of peace and dialogue among civilizations and to join hands in combating intolerance, extremism and violence in all its forms, and in fostering mutual respect among nations and peoples. This is a responsibility that lies with all Member States and international organizations.

Kuwait strongly emphasizes the importance of supporting this Organization in promoting the lofty principles enshrined in its Charter. I would like to elaborate on the positive steps my country has taken to promote and encourage dialogue among civilizations.

Kuwait is a member of the Group of Friends of the Alliance of Civilizations, reflecting its conviction in the importance of dialogue and interaction among civilizations and peoples. Kuwait has set up a national plan for 2009-2011 consistent with the Alliance of Civilizations initiative. The objectives of the plan are to foster a culture of tolerance, peace and moderation; to combat terrorism, intolerance and violence; and to raise awareness and interaction among various cultures and peoples. We have launched a number of programmes, activities and plans of action in our various ministries, and are now finalizing the third national plan, for 2011-2013.

Kuwait has also set up an international centre for moderation that calls for moderation of opinions, ideas and the treatment of others — precepts that are at the heart of Islam. Peace had deep roots in the culture and history of Kuwait even before its inception as a modern State. Peace has given rise to tolerance, acceptance of others and increased dialogue with all other cultures and religions. Our modern Constitution guarantees respect for the freedom of opinion, expression and religion, and the practice of religious rites in safety and freedom. Although small, Kuwait is a place where many peoples come together. We are host to more than 120 nationalities, representing religions and cultures from around the world and living together in security, stability, mutual respect and dignity.

In conclusion, we would like to emphasize that enriching and fostering a culture of peace is at the heart of respect for the lofty principles enshrined in our Charter, such as respect for human rights, freedom of opinion, freedom of speech, justice under the law, equality, the elimination of poverty and unemployment, and raising awareness of the culture of peace. It is impossible for a people deprived of its basic rights to live in dignity or nourish a culture of peace and tolerance. On that basis, my country calls on Member States to respect and implement those rights so that together we may enjoy a world of amity, peace and tolerance.

Mr. Javadekar (India): I am deeply honoured and privileged to participate in today's joint debate on the culture of peace, and grateful for the Secretary-General's comprehensive report on intercultural, interreligious and intercivilizational dialogue (A/66/280).

We note with satisfaction that celebrating the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures in 2010 and the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World, 2001-2010, has provided a unique opportunity for the United Nations system to reaffirm its fundamental commitment to the plurality of humanity, in which cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue are mutually reinforcing. I think this is exactly what the Indian ethos stands for.

In today's world we are witnessing the rise of extremism and intolerance, outbreaks of sectarian violence and increasing use of the language of hatred and violence. These pose a serious challenge to the very foundations of our society. Here we must salute Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr., who proved the power of non-violence. We must create an environment conducive to fostering a dialogue between diverse cultures, races, faiths and religions that

inculcates values that promote the transition from force to reason, from conflict to dialogue and from violence to peace. Dialogue among different cultures and religions is also important, because it is precisely in the absence of such a dialogue and understanding that intolerance, bigotry and violence flourish.

It is heartening to note that the Alliance of Civilizations, which includes a Group of Friends with 128 members, has now become one of the premier platforms for intercultural and interreligious dialogue within and between diverse societies. We therefore welcome the Doha Civil Society Pre-Forum.

We also support the Department of Public Information (DPI) in its endeavour to strengthen its voice on intercultural dialogue by organizing and covering a wide range of events. It should be mentioned here that on 5 May the Indian Permanent Mission to the United Nations associated itself with the DPI and the Indian Council for Cultural Relations in organizing an authors' colloquium on unlearning intolerance at United Nations Headquarters. The Indian delegation also organized a function to mark the International Day of Non-Violence at the United Nations on 30 September, at which the Secretary-General was the chief guest. India's leading historian, Mr. Ramachandra Guha, delivered the keynote address.

India, the largest democracy in the world and a nation of unparalleled diversity with a population of more than 1.2 billion, is the second most populous nation in the world. While India, of course, has the largest Hindu population, we also have one of the world's largest Muslim populations. And India is home to significant numbers of practitioners of almost every other major religious denomination, be it Christianity, Buddhism, Sikhism, Jainism, Zoroastrianism or Bahaism. India is the birthplace of Jainism. Gautama Buddha gave his first sermon in Sarnath, an eminent centre of Indian philosophy, after he attained enlightenment in Bodh Gaya.

All this happened because our kings offered land and facilities to all religions. The history of India, in essence, is a narrative of conversations between different civilizations and, indeed, a conversation with nature itself. India is home to scores of languages, hundreds of dialects and thousands of cuisines, and a medley of races, colours, landscapes and cultures. This assimilation and accommodation of diversity have contributed to the richness of our composite culture and the durability of our civilization. This we call unity in diversity.

Our civilizational legacy treats nature as a source of nurture, and high value is placed on living in harmony with nature. The Vedas are a repository treating of the holistic development of the human being in full harmony with its surroundings. The continuous strand of *vasudhaiva kutumbakam* — which means "the whole world is one family" — has been a constant guide for our interaction and exchange of thought with the outside world. The noble principles of life and spirituality, including non-violence, have influenced successive generations of people worldwide.

We in India understand the importance of building alliances between religions, cultures and ethnic groups, and we have always supported every effort to build bridges of understanding between nations, peoples, religions and cultures around the world. It is our considered view that successful pluralism must be grounded in the basic tenets of mutual understanding and respect for diverse traditions. The Indian ethos believes in the tenet of ekam sad vipra bahudha vadanti, meaning that there are many ways to reach God. The Indian ethos also treats believers and non-believers equally. This is also critical to the harmonious development of all sections of society, including the encouragement of gender equity and the empowerment of women all over the world.

The only way to achieve this goal is to move conceptually towards a new dimension of dialogue and harmony among diverse cultures, races, faiths and religions so that all human beings can live in the sane and peaceful global society of our collective dreams.

Mr. Goraish (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me to express my country's appreciation for the efforts of the United Nations to foster a culture of peace and to introduce it onto the agenda. We would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his work in fostering a culture of peace, dialogue and peaceful coexistence among the peoples of the world.

We have read the Secretary-General's report (A/66/280) of 8 August 2011, submitted pursuant to resolution 65/138, in which he provides an overview of the activities carried out by the main United Nations entities in the field of dialogue among civilizations, cultures and religions. He also takes stock of the consultations among Members of the United Nations to

foster dialogue among cultures and religions and peaceful coexistence among nations.

We believe that we have to devise effective mechanisms to foster the culture of peace in all its dimensions, including dialogue among cultures and religions, in the near future. I take this opportunity to highlight our commitment to the various resolutions of the General Assembly, particularly resolution 53/243 of 13 September 1999 on the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace; resolution 52/15, proclaiming 2000 the International Year for the Culture of Peace; resolution 53/25 of 10 November 1998, proclaiming the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World (2001-2010); and resolution 65/11 on the implementation of the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace.

My country has also expressed its support for all other initiatives, including the Interfaith Dialogue and Cooperation for Peace and Development held by the Heads of State and Government of the Non-Aligned Movement in Manila in March 2010. My country has made additional efforts in that regard alongside Egypt, Pakistan, Indonesia, Morocco, Iran, Qatar and Senegal. In that connection, I would like also to highlight the importance of the high-level meeting on interfaith dialogue that was held in November 2008 under the auspices of King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud of Saudi Arabia within the framework of his efforts, ranging from Mecca to Madrid, to advance all initiatives aimed at achieving today's goals.

The Sudan has been at the forefront of countries calling for the promotion of a culture of peace among religions and cultures, given its status as one of the founding States of the Non-Aligned Movement and based on our conviction of the importance of promoting dialogue among beliefs, religions and cultures as a way to achieve the goals of peace and development. That ideal is also enshrined in the Constitution of the Sudan.

As regards our national efforts, our country has taken all possible steps to advance peaceful coexistence and the culture of peace. UNICEF, in cooperation with the United Nations Children's Emergency Fund and the Sudanese Ministry of Youth and Sports and National Council for the Respect of the Rights of Children, organized a meeting on 24 September on the theme "We Will Come Together to Foster the Culture of Peace". The meeting highlighted the right of children to self-expression and participation in deepening the values of amity and brotherhood among the young people of the Sudan. A number of organizations participated in that event, which called for the promotion of peace among cultures. We celebrate that occasion every year.

Our country has also allocated more time to programmes fostering the culture of peace on our national radio and television stations and other media, with the aim of raising awareness of the importance of promoting the culture of peace.

Today, the international community is facing growing challenges related to the economy and climate change. The developing countries are working hard to implement the Millennium Development Goals and to advance the interlinked culture of peace between developed and developing nations, because the culture of peace cannot be separated from other development challenges. We must unite to foster the culture of peace.

In conclusion, I would like to inform the General Assembly that my country will continue to make every effort to live up to the lofty principles enshrined in our Charter based on fostering dialogue among cultures and religions and on enhancing peaceful coexistence instead of violence and confrontation. We should avoid alienating and marginalizing some countries at the expense of serving the narrow agendas of others.

We must bear in mind that people have come to see that they have been created equal and as different tribes, ethnicities and colours. They must live together in harmony and reach out to each other in order to serve the interests of peace and the lofty goals and principles of religions.

Mr. Srivali (Thailand): Thailand takes note of the commendable efforts of Member States and the United Nations system in promoting dialogue among cultures, civilizations and religions towards a culture of peace and implementing the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace, as reflected in the reports of the Secretary-General (A/66/280) and the Director-General of UNESCO (A/66/273).

As an original member of the Group of Friends of the Alliance of Civilization, Thailand looks forward to participating in the Alliance's next annual forum, to be held in Doha in December, and welcomes the emphasis

placed on creating synergies between the objectives of the Alliance of Civilizations and the advancement of the Millennium Development Goals at the upcoming meeting.

Thailand would like to share our views on this issue. First, Thailand encourages the use of new communications technologies and social media, as well as formal and non-formal education, to promote dialogue among cultures, civilizations and religions. Such regularized sharing of experiences, not just of knowledge, based on mutual respect and appreciation of diversity, can make an important contribution to world peace.

Secondly, we concur with the report of the Secretary-General, which stresses that the basic prerequisites for effective dialogue include equality, justice, poverty reduction and respect for human rights. Thailand supports the efforts of Member States in ensuring that these fundamental conditions are met, with the support of the United Nations and regional organizations. Peace must be built from within. That is why national ownership is so important.

Thirdly, Thailand is of the view that peace cannot be taken for granted even in the best of times. Rather, it requires continual effort to maintain and strengthen. In order to make peace sustainable, a culture of peace must be cultivated at all levels, especially among young people. All groups and sectors of society can and should play a part in promoting dialogue among cultures, civilizations and religions, including women, the media, civil society and the private sector.

Fourthly, Thailand fully supports the efforts of the United Nations, especially the United Nations peacekeeping missions and the Peacebuilding Commission, as well as other regional and international actors in pursuit of sustainable peace. In taking the lead in peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts around the world, the United Nations system must be well-coordinated and take a forward-looking, long-term view in carrying out its work.

Fifthly, Thailand remains committed to promoting dialogue among cultures, civilizations and religions at home. At the subregional level, cultural and religious dialogue is ongoing through exchanges of visits, workshops and seminars at all levels, including among religious figures, academics and representatives of the media and youth. At the national level, Government agencies have developed a national strategy on interfaith dialogue as a guideline for promoting Thailand's participation in regional and international interfaith dialogue cooperation frameworks and their implementation of relevant activities.

Thailand reaffirms its commitment to the culture of peace and will closely follow initiatives and activities on this issue.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.